



## The Loveless Blues



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### Chapter 1 by Rendon Edwards

Did not write this one either guys!!

It was a bright sunny afternoon with a fresh breeze blowing from the northeast. The small sloop was making a series of very short tacking maneuvers as it made its way gingerly up the narrow channel.

The forest marched down the steep rocky hillsides to abruptly meet the sea below on both shores. The tiny but sturdy craft was tossed precariously by the rip tides created in the close waterway. The sole occupant reset her grip on the tiller and brought the sloop around in yet another tack headed toward a little niche in the eastern shoreline. She was kneeling in the boat's compact cockpit watching carefully ahead for any telltale clues on the water that dangerous rocks lay just out of sight below the surface. She held her course on a starboard tack until she was just past a rocky spur which broke the forest cover and actually spilled over into the sea.

When she was about eighty yards from the shoreline she abruptly swung the boat head to the wind bringing it to an almost dead stop. As she was pulling in the sheets on both her jib and mainsails, she quickly scrambled to the bow and let her anchor line out till she felt the anchor touch bottom. She then ex

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anchor, allowing for both safe swinging room as the wind might shift and the expected change of depth as the tides came and went.

She had been so occupied with the business of sailing her small sloop, that she had not noticed that she had an audience. A tall slim young man in blue jeans, T-shirt and black leather bomber style jacket was sitting on the rocky spur smiling with open admiration at the sailing skill of the woman skipper on the neat little sloop. As she stood from securing the anchor and started to lower and tie down her sails, he arose and quickly walked back up into the trees behind him. So she never knew that her arrival had been noted.

< 2 >

When the sloop was secured to her satisfaction, Katherine went below and put a tiny kettle on the single burner in the diminutive galley. As she waited for the water to boil, she pulled a thick dog-eared ring binder out of a shelf to the left of the companionway and opened it to the last entry. This book served a dual purpose as a ship's log and personal journal. She noted her time of arrival and location of the tiny sheltered anchorage, the weather which was close to perfection for a sailor and a personal note that this seemed a great spot in which to write and create.

Katherine was just past her thirty second birthday, short of stature with what she self deprecatingly called a well-rounded figure. She had short cropped almost boyish auburn hair and blue grey eyes. When not working at her research position at a Vancouver newspaper, she was usually to be found out on her tiny sailboat or bent over a computer keyboard creating either the poetry or short stories that her abundant imagination thrived on. Now she had the best of both pursuits as she'd recently purchased a new laptop that allowed her to enjoy both leisure's at once.

When the kettle had boiled, Katherine made a large mug of steaming hot tea and taking the laptop with her, went back on deck. She made herself a comfortable workspace on the foredeck with her back leaning against a sail bag which in turn was propped against the mast. Before starting, she relaxed with the tea and surveyed her temporary neighbourhood.

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devoid of settlement. But when she looked more closely, she spotted at least four widely separated structures perched on the slopes and almost hidden by the forest cover.

< 3 >

One such structure, obviously a private home, albeit a large one, was nearly directly above her. She smiled inwardly thinking how often she had purchased a lottery ticket in hopes of realizing a dream home on the sea just like this one. Tea finished, Katherine turned to her laptop and let her imagination take flight.

Matt followed a well trodden path up the hill towards the big house perched above him. He shoved his hands in the pockets of the jacket as he moved in a long lazy stride. His short black hair matched the jacket and provided a contrast to his fair complexion. The eyes were perhaps his most outstanding feature, they were expressive of his every emotion and a very striking shade of green. As he made his way up the hill, he found himself wondering about the woman sailor who had chosen to anchor right in front of his house.

What made a woman want to sail alone and why was she here? Certainly, he thought, this wasn't the middle on nowhere, in fact, they weren't too far from Vancouver by either road or sea. But what brought this young woman to this spot all alone. He shrugged off the thoughts as he climbed the stairs to the deck and let himself into the house. He'd probably never know.

He went to the kitchen first to fill a kettle and make tea. While the water was heating, he checked his voice mail and found, surprisingly, only two messages. One was from his road manager who just wanted to get together sometime soon to go over details for next month's tour dates and one from a fellow musician who congratulated him on the recent Blues Award. Neither message was urgent enough to be returned right away and besides, he thought, these few days alone are my time.

When the tea was made, he carried his mug downstairs to the studio with its big windows

overlooking the water below. He sat down on a low over-stuffed couch, picked up an electric guitar and started to play.

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an athlete before a game. He found it both relaxing and therapeutic. The guitar almost seemed to cry beneath his skilled hands and slowly the toying became more serious and took real form. The words may come later but he was developing a melody that seemed to haunt him with its need to be played.

After running through the basic melody several times, he paused long enough to drink the tea which was getting quite cool then he crossed to the consul where he turned a recorder on to capture the developing work. When he stood, he glanced out the window and was able to see just the top of the mast of the anchored sloop. His earlier thoughts about the woman aboard flooded back.

"What brought you to my doorstep, hmm?" he mused aloud. He ran the fingers of one hand through his short hair causing one lock to fall across his forehead. He brushed at it ineffectually and went back to the guitar. The boat anchored below and its lone occupant were still in his thoughts and he found the only images that he could conjure were of water and sails. The music took on the fluid but powerful tones of the ocean as the melody really started to materialize.

Two hours later, he finally laid the guitar aside and padded barefoot back upstairs to start some dinner. He placed a couple of small boneless chicken breasts in a spice and white wine mix to marinate. Then he took some brown rice from a canister to cook it. He would then stir fry some vegetables; snow peas, onions, peppers and broccoli to add to the rice for a great side dish to the chicken.

While the rice was cooking, he went across to the large upstairs windows and his eyes were drawn again to the small boat below. He could see the whole boat from this vantage but no one was on deck. Katherine had also put away her laptop by now and was out of his sight below decks starting some dinner of her own. Hers consisted of a can of clam chowder and a sandwich made of thick home baked bread that she had made prior to departing on her cruise adventure. Matt found himself wondering again who she was and why she had chosen this locale for her anchorage.

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Matt had gone for his usual after dinner stroll along the beach and his eyes were drawn to the little sloop in the sheltered alcove. The craft was laying almost broadside to the beach and he could see her sides were painted midnight black with a blue white moon and icy blue stars grouped near the bow against the black field. He was now very curious to know the name of the little boat and to know more about her owner.

As he strolled along the sand, his nostrils caught the scent of a rich and delicious smelling coffee wafting across the water. Perhaps he should go back to the house and make his own coffee, he thought, as the scent tingled his taste buds. Instead his pace became more purposeful and he made his way quickly down the sand to the very edge of the rocky spur. In the lee of the spur there was a very short wooden float which extended only about ten feet into the water and was held there quite firmly by two large chains which were fastened to two very thick and sturdy posts which had been planted securely into the earth. Tied to the float was a small wooden row boat which Matt would sometimes use to do a little fishing, a pastime that he found very relaxing.

Matt quickly climbed into the row boat and bent his back to the task of rowing out towards the anchored sloop. He glanced over his shoulders frequently as he pulled on the oars to ensure his course was true. The summer sun would not go down for another two hours nearly so he was not concerned about being on the water in the dark. He kept telling himself he'd just row around the sloop, give her a look then maybe head down the shore to the next rock spur and back. After all, he reasoned, he could use the workout. The deck of the small sloop was empty, as Katherine was still finishing up her dishes.

< 6 >

As Matt gave one last pull on his oars, he came alongside the sloop at her stern and got his first look at her name. Painted on the same black field in the icy blue paint with stars to decorate it were the words 'BLUES IN THE NIGHT' and Vancouver, Canada in smaller script beneath it. Matt chuckled out loud with pleasure. What a great name for a neat little cruiser like this, he thought.

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"Ahoy aboard Blues!" he called tentatively, then smiled when Katherine spun around towards the sound of his voice and he got a chance to see the lady sailor up close for the first time. Katherine, for her part, was a little off balance by his sudden appearance in the midst of her solitude but recovered her cool quickly.

"Hi, you startled me. I was below and didn't hear you rowing up." She was assessing the young man before her. He was very handsome and the little growth of goatee and mustache gave him an almost 'bad boy' look that she found somehow quite appealing. "Can I help you?" She asked, wondering just what he was doing here, had he come from the house on the hillside and was he who she thought he was? Even in the casual jeans and turtle necked shirt that he wore she was almost certain of his identity.

"Hi, I'm Matt. I live just there," he said, pointing up the house above them. "I don't have many visiting boats here. There's really only room for one very small boat, likes yours, so....

< 7 >

Anyway, I smelled your coffee and was looking at your paint job. That's an awesome name!"

He wasn't quite sure what to say next and so fell silent.

"Thanks," Katherine said, smiling inwardly to herself. Yes indeed, she thought, this was Matt Michaels, the blues guitarist. She had known that he lived somewhere just outside of Vancouver but never dreamed of meeting him in quite this fashion. She continued, "I like the blues and it seemed to work somehow, you know?"

Matt was boldly examining her as she spoke, and he liked what he saw. Even clad in an oversize sweatshirt and canvas cargo pants, she was still quite feminine and her blue grey eyes had a wonderfully deep and dreamy look about them like the stars on her boat. Katherine felt his scrutiny and became a little self conscious.

"So did you come to borrow some coffee?" she asked. He chuckled again, a rich sound that she

thought suddenly made him seem older than she had at first guessed. She was trying to remember a recent article that the man had written for a magazine. All she could recall for sure was he had recently won some sort of award.

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"Not really, but now that you mention it, I do like your coffee." He smiled winningly. "We could just say this is a visit from the neighbourhood welcome wagon, what do you think? Hi! I'm

Matt, welcome to the neighbourhood." He winked at her and continued, "May I come aboard Skipper, 'cause that coffee smells too good to miss."

She smiled broadly at his boldness. His green eyes flashed with enjoyment of the little game he was concocting and she found herself trusting him despite all the usual warnings she knew so well about strangers. Besides, she reasoned, he wasn't really a stranger because she knew who he was, even if they'd never met.

< 8 >

"Well Matt, I'm Katherine." She told him. "And, conveniently enough, I just made a full pot so why don't we tie your dingy here and you can share a cup with me while you tell me all about the neighbourhood." She had leaned over the transom and taken the little rowboat's painter in hand. She tied it off securely to a cleat on the starboard corner of the transom. She then lowered the little two step ladder that would allow Matt to easily climb to the deck of the sloop.

Once Matt was aboard and on a level with her, Katherine realized he was quite a bit taller than she had first thought. He was very slim but beneath the fine features she could certainly detect a strength and solidity.

Matt extended his hand and they exchanged an almost formal handshake. Katherine was again conscious of his strength through the firm grip he took of her hand. He held the grip a little longer than necessary and caught her eyes in his sparkling green ones.

"So it's official, Katherine," he solemnly pronounced, "Welcome to the neighbourhood." He broke into a boyish grin and added, "Now how about that cup of coffee?"

Katherine went below to pour the coffee. Matt made no move to follow her but instead was examining the rigging and fittings of the sloop. He was very impressed with the tidy little boat. She was very well maintained and every last line was coiled neatly evidencing the respect and care that her owner obviously felt for the craft.

"What do you take in yours?" she called from below.

"Just cream," he replied. "Is that all right?"

"Yes it is. I like to put a little cinnamon in mine." Katherine came back on deck, handing Matt a large steaming mug. "Oh, I hope you like cinnamon."

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&lt; 9 &gt;

"Love it." he grinned, "In fact, I kind of have a taste for spices of all sorts. Nutmeg and allspice are good in coffee too." Matt followed Katherine's lead and moved out onto the tiny foredeck of the sloop. There was a thick wool blanket spread out there which made it a comfortable spot to lounge while they talked. She put her mug in a safe but easy to reach spot by the mast and he did likewise. When she settled down, she was cross-legged Indian style. Matt sat beside her but stretched his legs out in front of him keeping his sneakers off the blanket.

"So Mr. Welcome Wagon, tell me about the neighbourhood." she asked.

"What's there to tell? I live up there. There's a couple of other houses along the way there but I've never met the neighbours." He shrugged. "I'm not really home very much and when I am I'm usually working. But the scenery here is beautiful and it's just good, you know?"

"I know what you mean, Matt." she said, staring into the mug that she cradled in both hands. "I love it out here too. Whenever I get the chance to get away for a few days, I get out on the boat and just look for a quiet spot."

"So that's what brought you here today." he said softly. "I saw you arrive this afternoon. You're a pretty good sailor, Kathie. You handle this little boat like a pro." his praise sounded quite genuine and she looked up from the coffee and gave him a grateful smile.

"Thanks, she is a very forgiving little boat to sail." Katherine told him. "I've been single-handing her for almost four years now, so we've kind of become used to one another."

"That's an interesting way to put it." he mused, "Kind of like the way I feel about my guitar. Sometimes I feel that it's simply a part of me, the music's great when it's like that."

&lt; 10 &gt;

"Music is the most fluid and alive of all the arts." she said with conviction. "I've always surrounded myself with all kinds. But I think I'm most partial to the blues because they seem to

come from closest to the soul. I listen to a lot of Steve Ray, Eric Clapton, John Lee Hooker and ... oh too many to mention!"

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Matt reached across and patted one of her knees. "It's all right, Kathie. I know I'm not the only blues musician out there. There's a whole lot of really great ones. And I wasn't really expecting you to heap praises on me or anything. I really think it's great to meet anyone who loves the music the way you obviously do." He gave her knee one last squeeze before withdrawing his hand.

"I really must get to know your music better," she told him, though her mind was still focused on the hand which had come close to caressing her knee, instead of a casual pat of reassurance.

Matt took the last swallow of his coffee and placed the mug back against the mast. "Well in that case, I'll see that you get tickets to my next show. That coffee was superb." He stretched his arms above his head, clasping his hands together as he did so, then took a deep breath and started to rise. "I should be heading back to the house. I'm trying to be more disciplined about working. Thank you for the coffee and the talk. It's been a pleasure."

They both rose and Katherine picked up both mugs as they made their way back to the stern of the vessel. Once there, Matt took the mugs out of her hands and deposited them safely on one of the cockpit seats. He turned and took both her hands in his and she felt the electricity of his touch as his fingers played subtly on her palms.

< 11 >

"It was great meeting you, Katherine," he said, softly. His green eyes caught her blue grey ones and she felt the intensity and passion that simmered just below his surface. "Would you consider dining out tomorrow evening? I don't mean "out" exactly. But, I'd be very pleased if you'd join me for dinner up at the house."

Katherine's heart almost skipped a beat. The combination of his hands on hers and the deep endless wells of his intense eyes were having an intoxicating effect on her. She managed to regain her composure and answered him with a smile.

"Yes. I'd like that very much."

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Katherine watched him as he walked back to the little dingy back in its place and looked back across the water and gave her a quick wave before disappearing into the trees.

She went below and tried, unsuccessfully, to put the final verses on a poem about the wind and sea that she had started earlier in the day. Somehow, Matt had managed in a few short minutes to totally sidetrack her.

Katherine gave up the effort and decided to call it a night. She went up on deck to retrieve the blanket from the foredeck and recheck the anchor line. She glanced up at the sky studded with the millions of tiny points of light not seen from the city and marveled, as always, at the vastness.

When she was back below decks she pulled her journal from it's shelf and sat down to sum up her day. But where to begin, she thought.

This is a great little anchorage. Just big enough for Blues and no one else! But now there is someone else!! Who would have guessed I'd anchor right in front of Matt Michaels house!!? My God but he's gorgeous. I can't believe he was even here....seems like a dream. Get a grip, girl. He's just a guy...dinner...what is that? Probably has his own cook up there in that big house. Well, maybe I'm not being fair. I hardly know him. Oooohhh but when he touched me!!!

< 12 >

Above her, in the house on the hill, Matt played on into the late evening. Running endless tunes through his head, trying to play away his tension. He kept reviewing his encounter with Katherine trying to figure out just where and when it changed from idle curiosity to ... what was it now? Infatuation? She was quite different from the kind of women he was used to meeting. Good lord though, he mused, she really was pretty, in a very appealing tom-boy kind of way. What would tomorrow bring?

He put down the acoustic guitar he had been playing. Instead he picked up the Fender Stratocaster, turned on the amp and let loose with a heart rending, gut twisting slow blues solo that left him finally drained both physically and emotionally.

Matt crossed his bedroom to the window which looked out over the water. There was no moon so the night was profoundly dark. But he could see the little anchor light glowing brightly from the "Bluebird" in the Night. The sight seemed to reassure him and he smiled.

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Katherine didn't bring much in the way of clothing with her when she sailed except the practical and serviceable shirts, sweat shirts and canvas pants that wore well for the kind of physical activity that sailing required. But she had come straight from the office to the marina on this trip so she had the dressy blouse that she had worn with her business suit that day. It was a very summery mint green and would look just fine with her blue jeans for a casual dinner date.

She made a quick and effortless trip to shore in her Zodiac inflatable with its small outboard motor. Matt was waiting there on the landing; this time helping her tie up the little craft. He then extended a hand and helped her out onto the float.

< 13 >

"I'm so glad you decided to join me." he said. "I don't get a chance to cook for a beautiful lady every day."

Katherine recalled her musings of the previous evening about a cook and felt the heat rise a little in her cheeks. She smiled up at him, "I'm looking forward to it. Thanks for asking me"

They moved off the little landing and she followed his lead up the pathway through the trees to the house. The path climbed quite steeply in places and several times he took her hand in his to guide her in the tricky footing. Each time he held her hand, images flooded her mind of those hands holding her much more intimately and she wondered if somehow he sensed her imaginings.

They climbed a short wide wooden staircase at the side of the house which brought them up to a spacious deck. Matt opened the double french doors and ushered her in to the house. To her left was a dining area with a small round wooden table and four comfortably cushioned captains style chairs. He had draped the table with a fine white linen cloth and added a single tall blue taper candle to the center. He really was trying to impress, she thought.

To the left was a large living area, with floor to ceiling windows at the far end of the room looking out over the water. Katherine was drawn to them immediately.

"The view is spectacular from here. She walked from the living area to the kitchen and now came back across the room with two wine glasses in hand.

"That's one of the reasons I love this place," he said. "It's just what I needed."

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"Yes please." she said, taking the glass he offered. She took a small taste of the delicate white wine and savoured the richness. "Mmm, this is very good."

< 14 >

"Glad you like it. Hope you like seafood too." He grinned, "You're a sailor right? You do like the fruit of the ocean?"

"I do like seafood, very much, Matt." she grinned back at him. "Besides, it's not often that a handsome man like yourself cooks me a meal. I think I should be thankful"

"Oh I'm sure there are plenty of handsome men around who'd be happy to cook you dinner, Katherine." he retorted, baiting her. "They're probably lined up round the block!"

"Not my block!" she replied, with a rueful chuckle. She turned back to the window to drink in more of the view. He moved close behind her so she could actually feel his warm breath on the nape of her neck. She felt a sudden but very pleasant tingling sensation creep down her spine. He put one hand across her shoulder, pointing across the water to the south and west. Her eyes followed the direction he indicated but the rest of her senses were on the contact now between them.

"When you came up the channel did you see the rocks way down there on the other shore? There's always a big group of seals there." he asked her.

"Yes, I remember them well. They sure were noisy." Katherine laughed a little nervously. Matt had dropped the hand that was pointing but made no move to break the contact between them.

"The fishing's really great just around there. Those seals know what they're talking about!" he laughed. "Come on. Let's eat." With one arm around her shoulders, he lead her back across the room and then pulled out her chair to help her get seated. The sun had all but gone so the candle light made beautiful patterns on the wall of the room as they began to dine.

< 15 >

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uncontrived interest in who she was and what she was about. She explained her job at the paper then added that she'd much rather write than research for others.

"Do you write then?" he asked, as he poured her a little more wine.

She chuckled almost to herself. "Yes I write. But most of it will probably never leave my computer's hard drive. I'm kind of a perfectionist, so it's never good enough to show to a friend let alone a publisher."

"You have to step out there and take that risk," he urged. "It's like my music. You just reach a point where even if it isn't perfect you commit to it, record it and move on."

"That's a great philosophy, Matt" she said softly. "Maybe I'll do that ..." Her eyes were sparkling in the candle's glow and Matt was reminded of the stars on the boat.

"You have stars in your eyes, Kathie" he told her.

"I have a 'star' across the table," she quipped back, and giggled. His laughter mingled with hers and he reached across the table and gently took the wine glass from her hand.

He then took her hand in both his, caressing it softly from the inside of her wrist to her finger tips. She trembled a little as the sensations of his touch traveled with electric speed to her core.

< 16 >

"Your hands are so soft and small," he marveled, thinking of his first impression of her as she sailed the little sloop so expertly all alone. "Would you let me read some of your writing some day?" he asked. "I'm not as intimidating as a publisher might be."

"I could I suppose," Katherine said quietly. "I will think about it Matt. It's a kind offer." He released his hold on her hand and smoothly started to clear their empty plates from the table.

"I'm not a harsh critic at all" he reassured her, "I'm awestruck by anyone who can express

themselves in writing

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Katherine took a deep breath and thought, "Is it the wine that's going to my head, she thought. All she could think of was the wine. She took another sip and again. Instead, he merely put his head around the corner of the door and looked at her.

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"Hope you like strawberries," he announced.

"Dessert too!" her surprise evident in her voice. "Thank you, I love strawberries. They are one of my favourites!"

He returned with the strawberries, sliced and served with ice cream and whipped cream. As he placed the bowl before her with a flourish, she became quite conscious of his closeness and fought an urge to reach out for him. Matt sat down again, stretching his long legs out beneath the table and folding his hands together across his stomach.

"You're not having strawberries?" she queried, noticing that he'd brought only the one bowl.

"I thought perhaps you might share one or two of yours." he told her, his green eyes twinkling in the candlelight. She lowered her eyes quickly from his, feeling a certain heat rise in her cheeks.

< 17 >

"Sure." she whispered. She spooned out a mouthful of the fruit and cream extending her arm towards him. Matt took the proffered spoonful, leaning forward toward her a little but not altering his comfortable stretching posture. Katherine had to slide her chair closer to his to reach his mouth safely.

"That's good." Matt murmured, and she wasn't sure if he was referring to the strawberries or not. She took a spoonful of the fruit herself and savoured the taste.

"Yes they are good." she agreed. When she again extended her arm to feed him another spoonful, he unclasped his hands and grasped her wrist very gently. He extended one finger to caress the inside of her wrist again as he took the fruit into his mouth.

"Very good indeed." he stated quietly. He rose and crossed to the big windows with his back to her. She was taken aback by his sudden departure which left her with feelings that were all mixed up.

Katherine toyed with the rest of the fruit and ice cream in the bowl watching Matt back as he gazed out the dark windows. After a while she laid the spoon aside and wiped the corners of her mouth. He turned back and she startled her.

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"Had enough?" he asked, without turning around. It took her a second to realize that the darkness outside allowed him to see her reflection without turning.

"Yes thanks, Matt. It was delicious" She crossed the room to where he stood but stopped one pace short of being right at his side. She extended one hand and touched his shoulder.

"Matt, what are you thinking?"

He turned towards her all smiles, but the green eyes had a much heavier emotion apparent in their half lidded sultry look. She found herself drawn into them like a moth to a flame.

< 18 >

"I was thinking how strange it was that you came and anchored right here." he said, he grasped both her wrists in his and pulled her towards him. She came willingly and found herself cradled against his chest. "You're so completely unlike anyone I've met before," He had not released his gentle hold on her wrists until he had guided them comfortably to hold him around his waist. When he did let go, he again gently caressed her with his fingertips.

Katherine drew in a breath and wondered would it be her last. She though she could die right here and now in his embrace, in arms that were now enfolding her and gently caressing her back and neck through her blouse.

"Matt ..." she started tentatively, but the words just escaped her.

"What love?" he murmured, his lips against her forehead, his warm breath making her head swim.

"Matt I want ..." she again choked on the words. Her arms and hands held him very tightly as though she were drowning and he was her saviour. Matt placed several tiny kisses on her forehead, then spoke again.

"You want what, my love?" There he said it again, she thought. She reeled internally, feeling the

emotional power in his every gentle and subtle touch. She raised her face a little to his, her head thrown back and neck exposed. He cupped the nape of her neck and the other grasped her waist to pull her into his arms.

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"You want what ...?" he asked again, then as he continued to gently kiss her forehead, ears and cheeks he whispered softly against her skin. "You want me to kiss you some more? Like this, or this, or perhaps this?" He chuckled, but it was a soft and very kind sound. His lips nuzzled against her ear, he spoke again. "May I tell you what I want?" he asked.

< 19 >

"Yes" came her tiny voice. Her whole body now tingled with the intimacy of every contact between them. She longed to tell him how much she wanted him right now but speech was near impossible.

Again his voice softly caressed her senses, "I want to make love to you. I want to know every part of you inside and out. I want to make you feel something so strong that you'll never want for another. I want you to cry out my name and I want you to know that I will cherish you. Do you want me to do those things to you?" His lips were still brushing her cheek and ear as he spoke these words. Her senses reeling, she could barely stand. Tears stung her eyes and her cheeks burned with the heat of her desire.

"Matt, I ..." she faltered again over the words, but then his eyes caught hers and she saw herself reflected there in his desire. "I want you," she whispered simply, "Make love to me, Matt."

His mouth bent to hers then, finally. And she parted her lips and welcomed him. Below them, outside the windows was the soft glow of her anchor light beacon and across the room the candle guttered and went out.

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